



DR. B. R AMBEDKAR: THE ARCHITECT OF INDIAN CONSTITUTION AND A CHAMPION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

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ABSTRACT

Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar known as champion of human rights, determined fighter, a deep scholar, global personality with the high constitutional and law knowledge has made significant efforts to lead the society on the path of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. He put stress on eradicating several social evils, and discrimination on the basis of caste, class, gender, race and the need for education and also exposed the problems of the depressed women. He strongly advocated for family planning measures for women and the betterment of women even involved in bad practices and professionals like prostitutions. Ambedkar created awareness among poor, illiterate women and inspired them to fight against the unjust and social practices like child marriages and devdasi system. As a social reformer, he believed in peaceful methods of social change. Being a pioneer of social justice, he always aimed for the empowerment of women. He realized the gender inequality among the Indian society and raised his voice to include them in the mainstream of society. Dr. Ambedkar has given equal status to women as men by providing many provisions in the Indian constitution, for strengthening and upliftment the position of women the society.

This paper focuses on an attempt to highlight Dr. Ambedkar's view on women problems before independence of India and its relevance after 75 years of independence. The methodology used was descriptive, analytical and critical method to understand Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's works with the help of secondary source i.e published books, articles and newspapers.

KEYWORDS: Awareness, Women Empowerment, Equality, Women education, Upliftment

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar was born April 14, 1891 in Mhow, a city of military cantonment then Central Province India. His father, Ramji Sakpal Maloji was a Subedar in the army and her mother Bhimabai Sakpal was a housewife. Babasaheb belonged to the Mahar called lower caste who were treated as 'untouchables'. But his father was an army officer was able to arrange a good education for their children, despite several resistances of the society Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a scholar, good teacher, efficient lawyer, devoted leader, committed writer, distinguished educationist, social rebel, powerful debater. He was observed in several roles as a noted scholar, teacher, lawyer, parliamentarian, administrator, journalist publicist, negotiator agitations leader and devote. He was an authoritative constitutionalist, an able administrator, liberal emancipator, master statesman, daring liberator of the downtrodden masses and a fearless fighter for human rights. The role played by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, as chairperson of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution, has shaped the socio-political fabric of the India today. Ambedkar was very meritorious in studies and after completing his early education in Bombay moved to the United States for graduate studies and research he did his graduate and doctorate from Columbia University, New York. He also studied at the London School of Economics and completed master's and doctorate from there too. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar fought for tooth and nail for woman's economics liberation and for securing woman's social rights, He stressed the need to safeguard the dignity and

to respect the modesty of the women folk. (S. Mohammad Azaal2013). The vision of Dr. Ambedkar about women is explicitly depicted in Indian Constitution. Equality of sexes is strongly backed by the constitution through articles 14, 15 and 16. The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. He laid down the foundation of social justice and there can be no social justice without gender equality. In his paper on 'Castes in India: their mechanism, genesis and development', Dr. Ambedkar described how women were treated cruelly by the way of sati, enforced widowhood and girl marriages just to maintain strict endogamy in a caste. The social evils regarding women in Hindu religion as well as in Muslim society were highlighted by him. As a researcher, Dr. Ambedkar extensively studied the position of women in both the religion (and also in the other religions) and thrown light on denial of rights to her and ultimately the status of individual. He stated that the consequences of purdah system on Muslim women were that it deprives her of mental and moral nourishment. Dr. Ambedkar sought that Buddhism awards women, status equal to men and considered women capable of attaining spirituality. By adopting Buddhism, Dr. Ambedkar expelled in just for underprivileged segments including women and accepting the dignified equal status. Dr. Ambedkar denied worshipping Hindu deities, ultimately freed women from inhumane customs, rituals and superstitions and made the way for her liberation.

Objectives, Method and Materials: The present paper is an attempt to highlight the analysis made by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar on gender relation which were artificially constructed under Hindu Social order and women problems in pre and post independent India and the relevancy of his modern democratic ideas in present and social scenario of India. The secondary data collected is the outcome of literature survey and material obtained from Internet, published papers, books, proceedings and speeches delivered by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in parliament, various conferences and meetings in pre and post independent India. It is evident from his speeches that he had great concern for women empowerment. The women's association was established in January 1928 and Ramabai, Dr. Babasaheb wife as its president. Along with the depressed classes conference in Nagpur in 1930 women also had their separate conference. In the Kalaram temple entry satyagrahas at Nasik in 1930, five hundred women participated and many of them were arrested along with men and ill treated in jails. The encouragement of Babasaheb to empower women to speak boldly was seen when Radhabai Vadale addressed a press conference in 1931. She said "It is been to die a hundred times than live a life full of humiliation. We will sacrifice our lives but we will win our rights. The credit for this self-respect and firm determinations of women goes to Dr. Babasaheb. Dr. Babasaheb believed in the strength of women and their roles in the process of social reforms. Addressing the Second All-India Depressed Classes Women's Conference held on 20 July 1942 at Nagpur, he said, "I measure the progress of community by the degree of progress which women have achieved. I shall tell you a few things which I think you should bear in mind. Learn to be clean; keep free from all vices. Give education to your children. Instil ambition in them. Inculcate on their minds that they are destined to be great. Remove from them all inferiority complexes." The presence of 25,000 women in All Indian Dalit Mahila Conference on 20th July 1942 pleased Dr. Babasaheb with their awaking and activities. In this way, Dr. Ambedkar stressed on education for the progress of women and our country. With a deep faith in their emancipation, Ambedkar advised them: 'Give education to your children'. In order to give economic rights and freedom to women, Ambedkar demanded educational rights, equality and right to property for women. To educate women, he asked co-education for women with men. Through education, he believed, that women would think independently which will lead to their intellectual and mental development.

Dr. Babasaheb spent his life into for the betterment of women even involved in bad practices and professionals like prostitutions. The greatest example of it was seen in Kamathipura a David, mediator working in brothel left profession persuaded by the thoughts and teaching of Dr. Babasaheb and looked the entire prostitute to give up their profession and lead the life of honor. (Sanjeev Kumar-2015) while addressing in conference to women Dr. Babasaheb could easily communicate with them as a homely person and conversion. He evoked of women in the following words, "Never wear such clothes which will degrade our personality and character.

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by providing many provisions in the Indian constitution. To him, sexual discrimination should be root out from the society and everybody should get equal opportunity in the society. The Preamble of Indian constitution guarantees social and economic justice to women and that is because of Ambedkar contribution.

In the preamble it is mentioned:

1. social, economic and political justice,
2. freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship,
3. equality of status and opportunity and
4. fraternity assuring dignity of the individual and national unity to all the citizens of India without any discrimination of caste, creed or sex.

He strongly criticized the degradation of women in Indian society. He believed that women should be entitled to equal status with men and they must have right to education. He also criticized the denial of rights to Muslim women for divorce. Ambedkar even opposed the Indian Muslim purdah system which he believed was contrary to the real purdah system of Islam. He was of the opinion that as a consequence of the purdah system a kind of segregation is brought about in the Muslim women which has deteriorating effect upon the physical constitution of the Muslim women thereby depriving her of a healthy social life. The isolation of males and females is sure to produce bad effects on the morals of men.

Constitutional Rights and Women In Indian Constitution

There are few articles exist that help the women of Indian society to improve their position and to compete with their male counterparts. For example Article 14 – All are equal in the eyes of law and equally protected by the law. It means equal rights and opportunities in political, economic and social spheres.

Article 15 prohibits discrimination on the ground of sex.

Article 15(3) enables positive discrimination in favour of women.

Article 16 mentions there shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office without any discrimination on the basis of religion, caste, creed and sex.

Article 24 prohibits the employment of children below the age of 14 years in factories, mines or in any other hazardous employment.

Article 39 and 39(d) state Equal means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work.

Article 41 the state shall guarantee within its economic limits to all the citizens, the right to work, to education and public assistance in certain cases.

Article 42 the state makes provision for Human conditions of work and maternity relief.

Under article 44, the state provides a uniform Civil Code to all

the citizens throughout the territory of India.

Article 46 – The state to promote with special care, the educational and economic interests of weaker section of people and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

Article 47 – The state to raise the level of nutrition and standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health and so on.

Article 51 (A) (C) – Fundamental duties to renounce practices, derogatory to the dignity of women.

Article 243D (3), 243T (3) & 243R (4) provides for allocation of seats in the Panchayati Raj System.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, tried an adequate inclusion of women's and depressed classes' rights in the constitution of India. He looked upon law as the instrument of creating a just social order. He incorporated the values of liberty, equality and fraternity in the Indian Constitution.

To ensure equal rights of education to depressed class, special provisions are given which includes-

Article 30(1) which gives the linguistic or religious minorities the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

Article 30(2) bars the state, while granting aid to educational institutions, from discriminating against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a linguistic or a religious minority.

Article 29 (2) of the Constitution of India defines the protection of interest of minorities and ensures that no citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.

Article 46 directs the state to promote with special care, the educational and economic interests of the weaker section of the people and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

CONCLUSION

Though the goal of women empowerment is yet to be achieved, Dr. Ambedkar's idea about the rights and development of women are still valid in the present scenario – not only in India, but in global context too. Dr. Ambedkar's three word formula – 'educate, agitate and organize' is a powerful tool of social change even today. Ambedkar made the oppressed lot of the depressed classes conscious of their rights, which was denied to them for centuries. The activities of empowering women worldwide should follow the vision of Dr. Ambedkar.

Dr. Ambedkar was a symbol of knowledge and character. He

regarded education as a means to reach the doors of light and perception to remove the regions of darkness and ignorance. He used his philosophy of education to make aware of the condition of social degeneration in Hindu society among the lower strata of society and change the social order for the benefit of entire humanity. Through his educational institutes, he strives for educational development of all. He was an 'organic intellectual' in real sense. Dr. Ambedkar's contribution towards education and his independent thinking made him an independent intellectual of the world. Dr. Ambedkar's thoughts on education and his educational philosophy are relevant even today in the 21st Century for the socio-economic and political development of our country. "So long as you do not achieve social liberty, whatever freedom is provided by the law is of no avail to you." – Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, India's first Law Minister.

Major implications of thoughts Babasaheb with sociological and social work perspectives are as below: 1) Practice of Untouchability and Devadasi system abolished. 2) Reservation in education and government jobs introduced for marginalised sections. 3) Marginalised sections got awareness about their entity and rights. 4) Concept of self, self-conscience, and self-dignity, increased for the weaker sections. 5) Professionalism adopted by the Institutional and noninstitutional services for empowerment of marginalised sections. 6) Strict implementations in rules, regulations, policies, programmes related with the welfare of the marginalised sections. 7) Social work profession strengthens with the support of laws and policies in community development and in other social work aspects. 8) He proposed the patriotic slogan for the unity of all sections of the society that is "I Am the first Indian and I am the last Indian", finally slogan resulted in to social transformation and reduce the impact of social stratification. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a symbol of revolt against all oppressive features of Hindu society". His dream of society, based on gender equality is yet to be realized and therefore his thoughts are important for the social reconstruction that favors women empowerment. Dr. Babasaheb expressed his views on the state of life of all women. He stated that women must be treated equally and given equal prestige. He insisted on Hindu Code bill suggesting the basic improvements and amendments in assembly. He also insisted and evoked all the parliamentary members to help to pass the bill in parliament. Eventually, he resigned for the same. The teachings and thoughts of Dr. Ambedkar are useful not only women but also all the Indian even today. His deep concern and feelings for all round development of women is expressed from his each sentence and word.

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